THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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August, 1975

FOR RELEASE ON RECEIPT

The first of the galleries scheduled for renovation under Phase V of The Cleveland Museum of Art's extensive program of reinstallation of its collections is now completed and open to the public. Phase V is the final segment of the rearrangement program which began in 1968.

The newly renovated gallery, located at the southeastern end of the 1916 building, houses Gothic tapestries, Renaissance furniture, and a late 15th-century mantelpiece acquired by the Museum in 1970 but never before displayed.

The massive Gothic-style mantelpiece, believed to have come from a chateau in St. Amand-les-Eaux in northern France, is a gift to the Museum from Dr. and Mrs. Paul G. Ecker. It is carved out of limestone and stands eleven and one half feet high. It came to the Museum disassembled and has been kept in storage until the current gallery renovation provided space for its installation.

Hanging on the walls to the right of the mantelpiece are three tapestries which once hung in the chateau of Chaumont in the Loire Valley of France. The set of tapestries, woven between 1500 and 1510, illustrate a theme popular in medieval art and literature--that everything in this world is impermanent and that only eternity endures.

The first tapestry in the set depicts the Triumph of Eternity as represented by the coronation of the Virgin Mary. The second panel pictures Youth and its sudden interruption by death. The third panel is a commentary on Time; it contrasts the pleasures of youth with the coming of old age.

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The three tapestries are crowded with richly costumed figures set in idyllic landscapes containing trees, rolling hills, and streams meandering through flower-filled meadows. The tapestries are remarkable for their glowing jewel-like colors--predominantly reds, blues, and greens--and for their excellent state of preservation. In 1973 and 1974 they were displayed in an international loan exhibition, "Masterpieces of Tapestry from the 14th to the 16th Century," seen at the Grand Palais in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Hanging beside the Chaumont tapestries is another fine Loire Valley tapestry, a pastoral scene of shepherds in a round dance, dating from the first quarter of the 16th century.

Installed on the opposite side of the room from the Loire Valley panels are two Flemish tapestries woven in Tournai, an important center of tapestry production in the 15th and early 16th centuries. The earlier tapestry, dated around 1480, illustrates the myth of Perseus and Andromeda. The second tapestry, dating from the early 16th century, displays the coat of arms of the Medici family against a field of thousands of flowers.

Beneath the millefleurs tapestry--and introducing a Renaissance note to the Gothic motif of the gallery--is a long walnut credenza or cupboard made in Bologna, Italy, during the early 17th century.

Two richly carved pieces of French Renaissance furniture complete the gallery. On the left of the mantelpiece stands a walnut dressoir decorated with a profusion of carved figures, dating from the middle of the 16th century. In the center of the gallery is a walnut table of the same period. Its top is inlaid with coats of arms and the fleur-de-lis of France; its pedestals are ornamented with sphinxes and animals inspired by the Italian Renaissance.

According to William D. Wixom, the Museum's Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Decorative Arts, "The gallery, while not a period room, contains a

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mixture of Gothic and Renaissance furnishings typical of a French chateau of the 16th century."

During subsequent stages of Phase V, other Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo galleries in the Museum's original building will be renovated and reinstalled. When this work is concluded, the entire collection of the Museum will have been rearranged in cultural and historical sequence, a presentation unique among American art museums.

Phase I, the installation of the Oriental and Modern (post 1873) collections, was finished in 1970. Phase II, the installation of an 18th-century French room from Rouen and its adjacent galleries, was finished in early 1973. Phase III, the relocation and rearrangement of the collections of Ancient, Islamic, and Early Christian and Byzantine art, was completed in late 1973.

Phase IV, which saw the entire second floor of the Museum's West Wing renovated and reinstalled to house the collections of 19th-century American and European art, and the collections of African and Oceanic art, was completed in December of 1974.

The rearrangement of the collections has been financed primarily from the Museum's own funds and from private contributions. Over $2 million has gone into the project so far.

Phases III and IV also were supported by grants totaling $137,112 from the National Endowment for the Arts, matched three-to-one by gifts from friends of the Museum.

With the continuing help of grants and private donations, Phase V should be completed by 1976. The part of Phase V now under construction, and scheduled for completion in 1975, will cost approximately $220,000. Of this amount, $60,000 has been given to the Museum thus far.

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